Mission for Integrated development of Horticulture in North Eastern States including Sikkim. The scheme was then extended to three other hilly States namely Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal during the Tenth plan (2003-04) with a total outlay of Rs. 845 crore, of which Rs. 585 crore was for NE States. The Technology Mission is being implemented in a mission mode with an end-to-end approach which includes development and introduction of high yielding varieties and technologies, expansion of area, post harvest handling and management, markeing, value addition and processing of horticultural produce. It covers fruits, vegetables, spices, flowers and other horticulture crops.

Assistance to Vidarbha

2756. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government have taken to save Vidarbha farmers who are under debt burden;

(b) whether it is a fact that there are cows but no fodder or maintenance and the milk yield without any marketing back up are rendering the cows as a liability to Vidarbha farmers; and

(c) the reaction of Government on (a) and (b) above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) The Government of India has sanctioned a rehabilitation package of Rs. 3873.26 crore for six districts of Vidharbha region in Maharashtra. It is being implemented over a period of three years. This includes both subsidy/grant and loan component. The package *inter-alia* includes the following:

(i) Debt relief to farmers: Around Rs. 1296.00 crore of overdue loan amounts of farmers, as on 30th June, 2006 in the identified districts of Vidarbha in Maharashtra will be restructured/rescheduled.

(ii) Credit Flow: The estimated credit flow for the year 2006-07 is Rs. 1275.00 crore.

(iii) Interest Waiver: The overdue interest on agricultural loans as on 30th June, 2006 amounting to Rs. 712.00 crore will be waived. The burden of waiver will be shared equally between Central and the State Government.

(b) No such matter has been reported to the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying. A Special Livestock and Fisheries Package in 6 districts of Maharashtra is being implemented under which assistance is given under two components, as given below, to ensure adequate fodder for milch animals.

(i) Feed and Fodder Supply Programme.

(ii) Establishment of Fodder Making Units.

An amount of Rs. 6.12 crore was released to State of Maharashtra during 2006-07 for the above components. Also an amount of Rs. 72 lakh was released to Government of Maharashtra for setting up nine Milk Chilling Units in these districts.

(c) As mentioned in (a) and (b) above.

Decrease in cultivable land

†2757. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the cultivable land is constantly on the decrease;

(b) the extent of decrease in the cultivable land in various States;

(c) whether Government propose to frame any law to check the decrease;

(d) whether shrinkage of cultivable land is the main reason for fall in the production of foodgrains; and

(e) the steps being taken by Government for boosting agricultural production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. As per available estimates, there is a marginal decline in cultivable land from 185.09 million ha. in 1980-81 to 183.09 million ha. in 2004-05 due to increase in population and diversion of agricultural land for non agricultural purposes such as urbanization, roads, industries etc. The cultivable land in eleven States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.